



CALIFORNIA
Board
of
Psychology

2001/2002
Strategic Plan

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Introduction

California Board of Psychology 2001/2002 Strategic Plan

The California Board of Psychology (BOP) originated in 1958 when the first psychologists were *certified* in the state. In 1967, the Psychology Licensing Law was enacted by the Legislature which: 1) defined and protected the practice of psychology, 2) protected the title "psychologist" and 3) changed certification to licensure. It was at this time that regulatory boards shifted their primary focus to protection of the public. The BOP is one of approximately thirty regulatory entities which exist under the organizational structure of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA).

The BOP consists of nine members (five licensed psychologists and four public members) who serve four-year terms (a maximum of two terms). The Governor appoints the five licensed members and two public members. Another public member is appointed by the Senate Rules Committee, and the fourth by the Speaker of the Assembly. Public members cannot be licensed by the BOP or by any other DCA healing arts board.

The BOP appoints an executive officer as its administrator. The executive officer serves solely in the interests of the consumers of psychological services in California as does the BOP. The executive officer oversees the Board's civil service staff and ensures that all of its programs function efficiently and effectively.

The BOP is funded totally through license, application, and examination fees. It receives no tax money from the General Fund of the State of California.

The BOP regulates over 16,000 licensed psychologists, over 2,000 registered psychological assistants and approximately 200 registered psychologists.

Licensed psychologists may practice psychology independently in any setting and must possess a doctoral degree which meets licensure requirements, must have successfully completed 3,000 hours of qualifying supervised professional experience and pass a national written and Board administered oral examination. To renew a license, a psychologist must complete 36 hours of approved continuing education every two years and meet a laws and ethics course requirement every two years.

Psychological assistants are unlicensed individuals who are registered to a licensed psychologist or to a board certified psychiatrist as an employee to provide limited psychological services under direct supervision. Psychological assistants must possess at least a qualifying master's degree.

Registered psychologists must possess a doctoral degree which meets licensure requirements and must have completed at least 1,500 hours of qualifying supervised professional experience. Registered psychologists are permitted only to function at non-profit community agencies which receive a minimum of 25 percent of their funding from some governmental source. Registered psychologists may not function outside of this restricted and specifically defined setting.

Mission

The California Board of Psychology protects the health, safety and welfare of consumers of psychological services.

Vision

The California Board of Psychology will assure the protection of consumers of psychological services through its licensing, enforcement and educational outreach programs. These programs will set examples of efficiency through evolving technologies and professional standards. All consumers will have access to the highest quality psychological services.

BOP Functions

The BOP is dedicated to ensure that psychologists provide safe, effective and ethical psychological services to consumers. The BOP's activities fall into four broad categories.

Examination and Licensing

The BOP works to ensure that those entering the profession of psychology possess minimal competency to practice psychology independently and safely. This is achieved by requiring applicants for licensure to possess an appropriate doctorate degree from an accredited educational institution or from a limited number of California-approved schools and by requiring the completion of a minimum of 3,000 hours of supervised professional experience. Each license applicant must also pass a national written examination and a California oral examination.

Enforcement

The BOP's enforcement efforts are focused on protecting the consumer population from exploitative, incompetent and otherwise dangerous practitioners and unlicensed individuals. The BOP investigates and mediates consumer complaints. Complaints involving minor concerns may be closed with a verbal or written warning, a competency examination or an educational review. Other more serious complaints may result in disciplinary action including reprimand, probation, suspension, or revocation -- against the licensee. Proven sexual misconduct with a patient results in mandatory license revocation, and the Board will deny all applications for licensure or registration if the applicant is a registered sex offender. The Board's citation and fine program and probation program provide other tools that expand enforcement options.

Continuing Education

Continued competency by licensees is assured through mandatory continuing education requirements. The law requires that licensees complete 36 hours of continuing education every two years upon license renewal. The Board's recognized accreditation agency is the California Psychological Association's Mandatory Continuing Education Program Accrediting Agency (MCEPAA). The accrediting agency approves providers pursuant to the Board's regulations and tracks units of continuing education earned by every psychologist. The accrediting agency provides the Board with monthly lists of those licensees who are deficient in continuing education requirements. The Board conducts a 100 percent audit on all such deficient licensees.

Education and Outreach

The BOP's goal is to ensure that consumers are educated to make informed choices about psychological services through information provided on the Board's website, various brochures, press releases for significant disciplinary decisions, historical listing of all Board actions, on-line verification of licensure and registration and the Board's newsletter, the BOP Update. In addition, the Board educates the profession on the latest regulatory and legislative changes through the Internet and speaking engagements at educational institutions, professional associations and other organizations.

Strategic Goals

The BOP has established six strategic goals which provide the framework for furthering its mission.

Enforcement

Ensure that exploitative, negligent, incompetent and unlicensed practice of psychology is addressed through proactive, timely and consistent enforcement of the Psychology Licensing Law and the BOP's regulations. Ensure that the Psychology Licensing Law and the BOP's regulations are current and up-to-date in defining causes for discipline and the practice of psychology.

Licensing/ Examinations

Ensure that all applicants are minimally qualified to provide psychological services with safety to the public. Incorporate the latest technology in administering examinations and utilize examination development and validation methods.

Continuing Education

Ensure that all active licensees earn 36 hours of continuing education every renewal period. Conduct audit on all licensees and warn those who are not in compliance. Utilize cite and fine if warnings are not sufficient. Conduct ongoing review of the Board's recognized accrediting agency.

Education and Outreach

Educate consumers to make informed choices about psychological services. Make available current up-to-date information about the regulation of the profession of psychology to licensees, applicants, trainees and any other interested parties. Assist consumers to better understand the processes and procedures of the Family Court system used to resolve child custody disputes.

Regulation & Legislation

Ensure that all statutes and regulations are necessary, clear, and equitable to consumers, applicants, licensees and registrants. Monitor all legislative/regulatory proposals and ensure that all fiscal workload issues are anticipated.

Operational Efficiency

Increase organizational efficiency and cost effectiveness. Enhance the Consumer Affairs and Applicant Tracking Systems. Cooperate with the Department of Consumer Affairs in the development and implementation of an integrated consumer protection system.

Action Plan

The action plan is an evolving framework for the activities that are conducted by the BOP in fulfilling its mission and meeting its goals.

Enforcement Program

Goal

Ensure that incompetent, negligent or otherwise dangerous and unethical psychological services and unlicensed activity are minimized through proactive and consistent enforcement of the Psychology Licensing Law and the BOP's Regulations.

Board Committee Lead Responsibility

Enforcement Committee

Strategic Objectives

- Submit a BCP that would authorize the Board of Psychology to transfer its own complaint processing and toll-free 800 line for complaint information from the Medical Board of California. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Adapt initial expert checklist format for final expert opinions. (Target Date 06/30/02)
- Develop Excel spreadsheet of historical disciplinary information for the purpose of ad hoc reporting. (Target Date 06/30/02)
- Authorize expert case reviewers to sit in with investigators to interview Subjects in quality of care investigations when necessary. (Target Date 06/30/02)
- Work with APA, CPA and ASPPB to address Internet issues regarding advertisements and the provision of psychological services across state lines. (Target Date 06/30/02)
- Survey all complainants and subjects of discipline. (Target Date 06/30/02)
- Develop exit survey for expert case reviewer training. (Target Date 06/30/02)
- Consider new training methods for new expert case reviewers, e.g., perhaps a training video in conjunction with the training binder. (Target Date 06/30/02)

Ongoing Objectives

- Continue to respond and resolve complaints in a timely and efficient manner. Educate consumers through prompt and relevant press releases, consumer brochures, Internet presence and the BOP Update.
- Utilize cite and fine and the telephone disconnect law for unlicensed activity.
- Assure 100 percent probationer compliance.
- Revoke the license or registration of any licensee or registrant who engages in sexual contact with a current patient or with a patient whose therapy has been terminated within two years.
- Offer Board expertise and participation in any training for investigators, Deputy Attorneys General and Administrative Law Judges.
- Continue to report disciplinary actions to ASPPB National Data Bank.
- Update Disciplinary Guidelines continuously.
- Continue to require LiveScan and fingerprint card clearances pursuant to policy # L-98-03. Use Live Scan statewide to reduce the long wait for fingerprint checks by the Department of Justice.
- Provide licensing and enforcement information on the Board's website for consumer verification.
- Develop and monitor statistics on all enforcement activities.
- Continue to train and administer the expert component of the enforcement program.
- Ensure sufficient travel expenses for unplanned, unexpected in-state or out-of-state travel required for staff for testimony in court for administrative matters.

- Continue to collaborate with the California Judicial Council to enhance consumer understanding of the processes involved in child custody evaluations.
- Continue to ensure that complainants are notified of each significant stage in the administrative process (i.e., complaint received, investigation initiated, case closure, transmittal to AG, Accusation filed, Decision rendered).
- Ensure that all active probationers are interviewed twice each year to confirm compliance with all terms of probation.
- Ensure that a Board representative meets with new probationers at their professional offices within 30 days of the effective decision date to fully explain the terms of probation.
- Continue to conform to new federal law requiring the electronic reporting of all Board decisions to a federal data bank (HIPDB).
- For educational purposes, provide information to all licensees who are the subjects of closed investigations where concerns were noted.

Potential Performance Indicators

1. Number of victims coming forward to support ongoing cases.
2. Number of repeat actions for unlicensed activities and formerly disciplined licensees/registrants.
3. Website hits.
4. Number of complaints filed, investigations opened, Accusations filed, Decisions rendered and citations issued.

Licensing/Examination Program

Goal

Ensure that all licensees and registrants are minimally qualified to provide psychological services to the public.

Board Committee(s) Lead Responsibility

Credentials Committee
Examination Committee

Strategic Objectives

- Develop a supervision brochure. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Analyze historical reports of individual oral examiners for pass/fail statistics. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Enhance training program for all oral examiners including the development of a training video. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Submit Budget Change Proposal for Exam Coordinator (AGPA) position. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Develop desk manuals for Licensing Analyst positions. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Develop manual for all historical Board-approved and Legal Office interpretations of various laws and regulations concerning application processing. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Develop program so that all application forms for licensure or registration can be electronically transmitted over the Board's website. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Consider administering the oral exam and written jurisprudence exam more frequently. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Explore the efficacy of the oral exam. Consider implementing more effective and efficient competency-based testing methods in place of current oral exam. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Clear exception reports and request/correct nonsense data reports from CAS on monthly basis. Nonsense reports are reports of obvious data entry errors - impossible license issue dates, dates of birth or dates of discipline. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Submit a BCP to assume responsibilities for the License Verification Unit which currently is handled by the Medical Board. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Review and reconsider oral examiner selection criteria. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Utilize the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to develop necessary management statistical reports and to ensure timeliness in application processing. (Target Date: 06/30/02)

Ongoing Objectives

1. Maximize use of Internet and other technology to provide relevant and timely information to consumers, trainees, applicants, psychologists, and registrants.
2. Provide timely and quality responses and information regarding:
 - Applications and processing;
 - Renewals;
 - Examinations;
 - License issuance;
 - Relevant records and retrieval ability; and
 - Examination appeals
3. Continue to enhance ATS and update the procedure manual as needed.

4. Ensure that supervised professional experience requirements are relevant to the current practice of psychology.
5. Develop, monitor and enhance statistics from the licensing program.
6. Ensure that examination fees cover the costs of developing, purchasing, grading and administering the examinations.
7. Ensure continued written and oral examination enhancements through continued close collaboration with the DCA Office of Examination Resources (OER).
8. Conduct legally defensible written and oral examinations to test for minimal competency.
9. Continue to conduct exit surveys for candidates and commissioners.
10. Ensure quality training for oral commissioners.
11. Ensure that oral examiner selection criteria is met.
12. Proactively communicate with psychology training programs and internships.
13. Continue to provide on-line licensing/enforcement verification capability.
14. Maintain a bank of valid jurisprudence questions.
15. Monitor supervision regulations.
16. Continually update applications for licensure and registration.

Performance Indicators

1. Processing time and increased quality review.
2. Efficiency in examination scheduling and license issuance.
3. Number of examination appeals
4. Number of telephone calls and emails to the BOP from applicants and initial licensees/registrants.
5. Feedback from exit polls.
6. Website hits.

Continuing Education

Goal

Ensure continuing competence of all licensees.

Board Committee Lead Responsibility

Continuing Education Committee

Strategic Objectives

- Develop Continuing Education manual to include guidelines for ongoing review of the effectiveness of the MCEPAA relating to:
- Triggers for MCEPAA course audits. Recommend audit based on feedback.
- Review MCEPAA's procedures for approval of exact, repeat courses.
- Consider other models of course/provider approval.
- Justification of the fees being charged by MCEPAA.
- Accuracy of the MCEPAA reporting system
- Breadth of available providers/courses
- Availability of MCEPAA staff for providing licensees with information.
- Types/accuracy of statistical information provided to the Board by MCEPAA on a quarterly basis.
- Access to MCEPAA website - Assure friendliness for users and that Non-CPA-sponsored courses are as accessible as CPA-sponsored courses.
- MCEPAA website - Need on-line course feedback option (with copies sent to Board's website).
- Request that MCEPAA acquire a search engine that could locate approved courses by topic on-line.
- Evaluate methods used by providers to track participants' attendance at courses. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Delete requirement that all course reviewers must be members of CPA. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
- Monitor conflict of interest issues between MCEPAA and CPA. (Target Date: 06/30/02)

Ongoing Objectives

1. Update CE regulations as needed.
2. Perform ongoing review of MCEPAA.
3. Work with APA on common CE interests.
4. Update procedure manual for Continuing Education Clerk as needed.
5. MCEPAA is to provide quarterly reports to the Board for monthly renewals to include:

- A. Number of renewals
 - B. Number of deficient licensees
 - C. Number of deficient licensees who made up deficiency
 - D. Number of provider applications received, approved, denied and appealed
 - E. Status of appeals
 - F. Number and type of complaints filed by providers and participants.
- 6. Continue to provide feedback of course quality to MCEPAA.
 - 7. Ensure follow-up on all CE deadlines noticed in deficiency/warning letters.
 - 8. Maintain all deficiency/warning letters for 7 years.
 - 9. Maintain all Part 3 renewal certifications for 7 years.
 - 10. Maintain files/requests for waiver/correspondence for 7 years.
 - 11. Issue cite and fine for those deficient in CE.
 - 12. Provide feedback to MCEPAA regarding performance issues.

Performance Indicators

- 1. Number of deficient licensees.
- 2. Number of consumer complaints alleging incompetence.
- 3. Number of complaints by continuing education providers and participants.
- 4. Website hits.
- 5. Number of telephone calls and emails to the Board for general information.

Education and Outreach

Goal

Educate consumers to make informed choices about psychological services.
Ensure that the public and that the profession are continuously aware of the actions of the BOP with respect to licensing requirements, regulation promulgation and interpretation, policy statements and general information affecting trainees, applicants, registrants and licensees.

Board Committee Lead Responsibility

Consumer Education Committee

Strategic Objectives

Develop a "Consumer Corner" on the Board's website where all consumer information can be found.
(Target Date: 06/30/02)

Ongoing Objectives

1. Enhance and continuously update the Board's Internet website to disseminate BOP information and educational materials to the public.
2. Continue consultation relationship with DCA Communications and Education Division.
3. Publish BOP Update on semi-annual basis.
4. Continue speaking engagements with educational institutions, organizations, training programs and consumer groups.
5. Continue with press releases for significant decisions in enforcement cases.
6. Ensure that information relating to the regulation of the profession of psychology is available for use by all who may be affected by the information.
7. Maintain communication with other DCA boards, professional associations and educational institutions.
8. Include summaries of statutory, regulatory and policy changes in BOP Update and Website.
9. Proactively communicate with psychology training programs and internships.
10. Continue to offer on-line licensing and enforcement verification on the Board's website.
11. Continue to meet with the California Judicial Council to improve the processes involved in the family court system.
12. Increase public awareness of Board functions through public presentations, Internet presence and BOP Update.
13. Educate the profession on the risks of practicing without complying with all the laws affecting the current practice of psychology.
14. Develop and distribute annual consumer educational brochure for consumer education and protection.
15. For educational purposes, provide information to all licensees who are the subjects of closed investigations where concerns were noted.

Performance Indicators

1. Inquiries to verify licensure.
2. Coverage of BOP cases in response to press releases.
3. Repeat offenses (e.g., violation of supervision regulations).
4. Trends in applicant and licensee satisfaction surveys.
5. Website hits

Regulation and Legislation

Goal

Ensure that all statutes and regulations are necessary, easily understood and equitable to consumers and the profession.

Board Lead Responsibility

Legislation Committee

Strategic Objectives

Regulations/Legislation

Clean-Up Regulations

1. Amend Section 1391.7 - it refers to Section 2914(d) and should refer to Section 2914(c). (Target Date: 06/30/02)
2. Amend 1397.69 - Continuing Education - Participant Fees - Currently states that the \$35.00 fee is to be paid to an accrediting agency to report non-accrediting agency-approved courses taken by participant as defined in Sections 1397.61(d), 1397.63(b) and 1397.64(a)(2)(C). However, Section 1397.63(b) states that any licensee who receives approved continuing education credit by serving as an oral commissioner shall submit verification and the course attendee fee specified in Section 1397.68 "Provider Fees." It does not refer back to Section 1397.69. These Sections conflict. We need to change either Section 1397.63(b) or 1397.69. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
3. Amend 1396.4 to require licensees to post their licenses at their principle practice location. (Target Date: 06/30/02) Also, Section 138 of the B&P is new and requires all boards to promulgate regulations to require all licensees to notify clients that they are "licensed by the State of California." We should probably add an amendment to 1396.4 to add a statement that psychologists are licensed by the State of California.
4. Amend Section 1387.6(a) to require a 7-hour course rather than a semester or quarter. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
5. Move all training regulations (1387.5, 1387.6 and 1387.7) out of Section 1387 so that 1387 deals strictly with supervision issues. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
6. Amend Section 1393 to delete reference to Medical Board of California and substitute Board of Psychology (requires probationers to cooperate with the Medical Board's Probation Program). (Target Date: 06/30/02)

Regular Regulations and Legislation

1. Amend Section 1391.6(b) and 1387.1(g) to require supervisors of psychological assistants, registered psychologists and interns to get a signed release from patients so that supervisors are authorized to access their supervisees' records. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
2. Amend Section 1397.70 to clarify what happens when a licensee is non-compliant with the continuing education regulations for six months. (Target Date: 06/30/02)

Dan suggests that we eliminate the 6-month provision and simply state that any licensee who is deficient in CE and whose license is invalid for renewal is subject to citation and fine and/or disciplinary action. Fines/disciplinary action would be determined based on length of time licensee

took to correct deficiency and the history of previous renewal deficiencies. Exact language should read:

1397.70(a) - If documentation of the CE requirement is improper or inadequate, the license becomes invalid for renewal; and the licensee is subject to citation and fine and/or disciplinary action. The continued practice of psychology is prohibited while the license is invalid for renewal, and the renewal is forfeited. Continued practice without a valid license shall constitute grounds for appropriate disciplinary action pursuant to Section 2960 of the code or issuance of a citation and fine pursuant to Section 148 of the code.

3. Overhaul and streamline Section 1391 (the psychological assistant regulations) to provide consistency with Section 1387 (supervision regulations). (Target Date: 06/30/02)
4. Amend regulations to require that all requests for reconsideration of oral examinations shall be based solely on alleged procedural errors that have adversely affected the outcome of the examinations. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
5. Amend 1391.8 so that psychological assistants would be prevented from having direction or control over supervisors (hiring and firing authority). (Target Date: 06/30/02)
6. Change regulations to allow an applicant who has earned an acceptable doctorate degree and 1500 hours of SPE to take the EPPP. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
7. Seek legislation that would authorize the Board to accept foreign degrees which are deemed to be equivalent degrees. (Target Date: 06/30/02)

Ongoing Objectives

1. Review and amend all regulations pursuant to the following six criteria:
 - a. Necessity: Is there demonstrated evidence that there is a need for the regulation?
 - b. Authority: Does the BOP have legislated authority to adopt the regulation?
 - c. Consistency: Does the regulation conflict with other regulations or statutes?
 - d. Clarity: Can the regulations be easily understood by those affected?
 - e. Non-duplication: Do the regulations duplicate other regulations or statutes?
 - f. Reference: Which statute does the regulation implement, interpret, or make specific?
2. Design legislative/regulation strategies to achieve the mission of the BOP.
3. Update Disciplinary Guidelines continuously (last done 12/99).
4. Enhance and improve supervision regulations (1387).
5. Amend regulations to improve and clarify the continuing education requirements.
6. Keep legislators informed.

Performance Indicators

1. Clarity in definition of the practice of psychology.
2. Website hits.

Operational Efficiency

Goal

Increase organizational efficiency and cost effectiveness

Board Committee Lead Responsibility

Executive Officer

Strategic Objectives

1. Participate in an integrated consumer protection system if the opportunity is presented. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
2. Explore the possibility of working with DCA to transfer all paper records to a new imaging system. (Target Date: 06/30/02)
3. Appoint a Sunset Review Committee and begin to compile the data necessary for the next Sunset Report which is due in 2004. (Target Date 06/30/02)
4. Explore the possibility of getting word search function for the Board's website. (Target Date: 06/30/02)

Ongoing Objectives

1. Strengthen staff training and development.
2. Update Board member and employee orientation package.
3. Continue efforts to reduce costs of operations while improving performance.
4. Review and evaluate budgetary documents to identify errors and potential cost-saving measures.
5. Conduct periodic progress review of BOP's strategic plan to determine goal completion.
6. Ensure equipment and technology are current.
7. Amend employee duty statements and desk manuals as duties change.
8. Update policy binder as needed upon BOP adoption.
9. Ensure that the Board's Personnel Committee provides an independent evaluation of the Executive Officer's performance annually.
10. Provide staff with annual performance evaluations.
11. Provide Board member training as issues arise.
12. Represent Board at all necessary out-of-state and in-state ASPPB, APA, CLEAR, etc. meetings.
13. Send out annual reminders to all delinquent licensees.
14. Review and evaluate efficiency of various DCA support services (Renewal systems, cashiering, information services).
15. Continually update agenda mailing list.
16. Continue to offer on-line enforcement and licensing/registration information on the Board's website.
17. Review and evaluate billing accountability and efficiency of Medical Board complaint intake and processing.
18. Review and evaluate billing accountability and efficiency of Medical Board investigations.
19. Review and evaluate billing accountability and efficiency of the Office of the Attorney General.
20. Review and evaluate billing accountability and efficiency of the Office of Administrative Hearings.

BOP's External Assessment

Although this strategic plan did not include a formal survey of external stakeholders, the Board drew upon the following information to identify factors and trends which are likely to influence the environment in years to come:

- Number and type of complaints received and causes for discipline rendered
- Feedback from consumers, professional organizations, schools, licensees, registrants, applicants and training institutions
- Queries and other contacts with consumers
- The media image of psychologists
- Internet/communication technology
- Legislative and political trends
- Relationship with the Department of Consumer Affairs
- Managed care
- Psychologists potentially obtaining prescription privileges
- Issues surrounding Family Court procedures
- Ensuring quality mental health services for victims of crimes
- Emerging trends which impact standards of practice

BOP's Internal Assessment

In developing the Strategic Plan, the BOP assessed the internal factors which either support or limit the achievement of its mission.

Strengths

- Dedicated, experienced and competent staff
- Cooperation from professional associations
- Innovative new ideas
- Good working relationship and reputation with DCA, Medical Board investigations and with the Office of the Attorney General
- Board and staff commitment to consumer protection
- Informative website - effective use of technology

Weaknesses

- Small staff size relative to work load.
- Red tape:
 - a) Mandatory approval by Department of Personnel Administration of represented employees' hotel room rates
 - b) Regulatory Process
- Board member vacancies.